

# EXHIBIT 64

### Memorandum

**To:** Members of the Corporation  
**From:** Drew Faust and Mike Smith  
**Subject:** Proposed Changes in Admissions Policy  
**Date:** February 2, 2011

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Following up on the analysis and discussion at the January 10 Corporation meeting, we write to request your approval for a restoration of non-binding, single-choice early action as an element of the Harvard College admissions process. This memorandum, together with accompanying attachments, sets forth:

- The specific form the new early action would take, the timeline for its implementation, and the shape of the revised admissions cycle;
- The context for this request, in terms of history and peer practice, and in relation to our decision in 2006 (effective fall of 2007) to eliminate early action in favor of a single admissions cycle;
- The reasons for our judgment that a return to early action is in the best interests of the College and consistent with broader policy goals;
- The mechanics of “new” early action, options considered, and reasons for recommended approach;
- The elements of an enhanced recruiting program to ensure that the return to early action remains true to our goals of access, opportunity, and excellence across the admissions cycle; and,
- A draft press release to give a sense of how we will aim to position this decision with our own constituencies and the broader public.

### Recommended Action

#### *The Structure of the Proposed Early Action Program*

We recommend a return to a single-choice, non-binding early action program for this coming fall (2011) (see *Exhibit 1: Early Admission Programs – Models and Peer Practices*, and *Exhibit 2: Range of Admission Process Options*). This program would be similar in structure to the early action program in effect at Harvard until 2007, but would be accompanied by an enhanced recruiting and outreach program designed to ensure that our goals of access, opportunity, and excellence are served aggressively across our admissions cycle.

The proposed early action program would be structured as follows:

- Students would apply by November 1 and be notified by December 15 of a decision to admit, deny admission, or defer their application for further consideration in the regular decision cycle.
- Students may not apply to other colleges under early action or early decision programs. Harvard will withdraw any offer of admission to a student who does so.
- Students may apply simultaneously to any college under regular decision programs.

*The Overall Admissions Cycle*

With a return to early action, we would maintain the current “regular decision” deadlines, which require that students apply to Harvard by January 1, are notified by April 1, and have until May 1 to decide about matriculation (see *Exhibit 3: Overview of Proposed Total Admissions Cycle at Harvard*). As noted, because our proposed early action program would be non-binding, all students would have until May 1 to make their decisions.

In the period between the early action and regular decision notifications, we would plan to send more “likely” letters to top candidates who miss our early action deadline but are certain to be admitted on April 1. (See *Exhibit 4: Sample “Likely” Letter*.) These will include students from modest economic backgrounds whose inadequate high school counseling caused them to miss our November 1 deadline. But it would also include candidates from all economic backgrounds who bring the kinds of excellence that Harvard and other selective colleges seek.

Finally, we will continue to maintain a waiting list for applicants from the regular admissions cycle (including early applicants “deferred” to regular admission on December 15), admitting those students on a space available basis between May 1 and July 1.

**Context for Current Recommendation***Early Admissions at Harvard: History and Peer Practice*

The Ivy League first introduced a formal early admissions program in 1977 (Class of 1981), and some form of early action admissions was employed by Harvard College from that date until we eliminated the program in 2007 (Class of 2011). The landscape of early admissions has evolved over time, with changes made in the policies of our closest peers, and with different forms of early action in effect at the College (see *Exhibit 5: History of Early Admissions at Harvard*). Over this period, early applications increased faster than regular applications, reaching a peak in 2003 at 36% of total applications. In 2004, Harvard moved to single choice early action, controlling the number of early applications received. Harvard has never had an early *decision* program (binding)—based on the principle that it is important that students be able to apply to other colleges, compare financial aid packages and make a more informed choice in May, rather than October, of their senior year.

*The Decision to Eliminate Early Action*

In 2006, the Corporation voted, with the support of FAS Interim Dean Jeremy Knowles and Interim President Derek Bok, to eliminate early action as a part of ongoing efforts to expand access and affordability. (See *Exhibit 6: Press Release, September 12, 2006*.) President Bok outlined the following reasoning for the decision: “The college admissions process has become too pressured, too complex and too vulnerable to public cynicism. We hope that doing away with early admission will improve the process and make it simpler and fairer.” (See *Exhibit 7: The Decision to Eliminate Early Action in 2007*.) Specifically, our goals were to:

- Simplify admissions for Harvard and for elite higher education more broadly;
- Eliminate the perceived admissions advantage from applying early;
- Extend the fall recruiting period, allowing Harvard to engage underserved students more intensively in the fall; and

- Reinforce Harvard's message regarding access and affordability.

Our thinking in this regard was informed by research showing that early action was being used increasingly by institutions to bolster yield and boost college rankings. Meanwhile, sophisticated students and their parents looked to early decision and early action to increase their chances of admission to selective (and not-so-selective) institutions, because it was understood that the chances of admission were better for early applicants. Research had also demonstrated that early admission programs favored students from more privileged backgrounds, with access to college counseling that provided stronger guidance through the college application process. Early admission programs also distorted the secondary school experience, placing pressure students to make a highly consequential choice prematurely.

Finally, during the early 2000's, certain of our Ivy League peers, most notably Stanford and Yale, had responded to growing concern about the distorting impact of early programs with a move from their long-standing, binding early decision programs to non-binding, single choice early action on Harvard's model. Thus, it seemed worth exploring whether, as part of our broader access agenda, we could use our leadership position in higher education to influence key peers to abandon it altogether.

#### *An "Experiment" from the Outset*

Understanding that our agenda of simplifying admissions from the student's point of view would only work if key peers followed suit, and understanding, further, that if they did not we might face increased competitive pressures for top students, we announced the elimination of early action as a pilot program. After laying out the plan to eliminate early action, our initial press release specified that: "Harvard will commence the unitary system with a two- to three- year trial period so that it can monitor the impact of this change and make sure that it does not have a negative impact on student quality" (*See press release, Exhibit 6*). As Dean Fitzsimmons put it in the same announcement, "We have always felt that early action avoids the most troublesome aspects of binding early decision while preserving the original aim of early admission – providing students with early notification of admission without binding those who change their minds later in the process.... If, after several years with a single admissions deadline we find ourselves needing to reinstate early admission to improve the quality of our student body, we will return to early action" (*see press release, Exhibit 6*).

#### **Reasons That We Recommend a Return to Early Action**

We recommend a return to early action for three main reasons. First, the "public policy" dimension of our experiment – to simplify the admissions process from the student point of view – did not succeed, as only Princeton and UVA joined us in eliminating early action (*see Exhibit 8: Summary of Results from the Early Action Experiment*). Thus, a given student arguably faces greater, rather than less, complexity in deciding how to how to navigate the admissions landscape in which Yale and Stanford offer an early option and Harvard and Princeton do not.

Second, since 2007, the trend toward early admissions has intensified, rather than diminished, as uncertainty about the future arising from the economic downturn has created greater anxiety about applying for college. (*See Exhibit 9: Early Applications to All COFHE Schools*). More than ever, students and their families are anxious to seek the best and most affordable options for higher education. This anxiety has led record numbers of students to apply to college both regular decision and early, and college counselors often respond by encouraging students to apply early in order to ensure a spot in a

selective college. At some of Harvard's most productive "feeder" high schools, for instance, up to 90% of students apply early somewhere. By not offering an early admissions option, therefore, Harvard has placed itself at odds with trends in the market.

These forces are visible in admissions results for some of our most desirable students – academically-well prepared first generation, under-represented minority, and low income students, and top students from across the income spectrum who seem to want an early option. A careful review of admissions results since the end of early action demonstrates that although Harvard has seen a rapid increase in the number of applications it receives, and yield rates have held up remarkably well overall, yield rates have declined meaningfully among some of the most talented and desirable students (*see Exhibits 10-12: Changes in Yield Rates*). While our "win rate" is still strong against key peers, it has been declining (*see Exhibit 13: Admissions wins versus Yale, Stanford and Princeton*). Some of this decline may be among cross-admitted students, who are admitted early to our peers and are then the target of aggressive recruiting strategies. In addition to these students, we do not know how many students are admitted through early programs elsewhere and therefore never apply to Harvard.

Of particular interest given the rationale for eliminating early action, our Admissions office is becoming increasingly concerned that not having an early admission option is causing us to lose some of the most academically talented and prepared low-income and underrepresented minority students. Our new financial aid initiatives have attracted large numbers of low-income students from among the better public and magnet schools, schools in more mixed-income districts, and affluent public schools with bussing options, voluntary open enrollment, or small low-income pockets in their communities. In fact, many of our low-income and minority students come from our top "feeder" high schools (*see Exhibit 14: Top High Schools Sending Low Income and Minority Students to Harvard*). Furthermore, many of the best private secondary schools have, like Harvard, provided financial aid to needy but promising students. As a result, many private schools are considerably more diverse economically and ethnically than many public schools given the real estate prices in affluent towns. Increasingly, these students are counseled to apply early to their top choice program to better their chances of admission. This trend was beginning to manifest itself in the years immediately before we eliminated early action resulting in increased diversity among our early applicants and an early pool that looked more like regular admissions pool, and it has likely continued since we eliminated early action. (*See Exhibit 15: Diversity of Harvard's Early Applicants and Exhibit 16: Diversity of Harvard's Early and Regular Applicants.*)

These concerns – the failure to instigate a policy change among our peers, the increasing demand from students for an early admission option, and the decline in yield among the most desirable students, including talented low income and underrepresented minority students – have led us to the conclusion that Harvard should reintroduce early action. Not to do so potentially puts at risk not only our access to top minority students and the best students eligible for the low and moderate-income component of the Harvard Financial Aid Initiative, but also our competitive position with regard to the very best candidates from all economic backgrounds. All of these exceptionally talented students – whether minority, low income, or privileged – help to ensure Harvard's pre-eminence in the Putnam Math Contest, the Rhodes and Marshall competitions, and the production of great performers, athletes and public leaders.

## **Why We Recommend Single Choice Early Action and How We Will Ensure that it is Consistent with Our Goals of Access and Opportunity**

### *Options Considered*

As noted, we are proposing that Harvard return to single-choice early action, a non-binding program where students apply by November 1, receive an admissions decision by December 15, and enroll by May 1. Single choice early action allows students to apply to multiple institutions, compare programs and financial aid packages, and make the best decision for them on May 1 of the senior year of high school. It will also allow Harvard to recruit early-admitted students in a focused way over an extended period.

Our decision to recommend single-choice, early action is based on our desire to have an early option that is as flexible as possible for students, giving them maximum freedom and time in their senior year to find the college that best suits their needs and talents. Thus, we would not consider binding early decision, which is contrary to Harvard's history, tradition, and principles regarding admissions, and would be viewed as a very odd choice coming on the heels of our 2006 decision to eliminate early action altogether. (*See again Exhibits 1-2.*)

Likewise, we do not think that a return to a wide-open early application process would serve us well. Previous experience tells us that open, unrestricted early action would likely increase the number of early applicants to unmanageable levels. For the Class of 2015, Harvard received almost 35,000 applications, a 15% increase over the previous year. In the most recent years with a single-choice early action program, fewer than 20% of applicants applied early, but between 2000 and 2004 when Harvard had few or no restrictions on early applications, more than 30% of applicants applied early (*see Exhibit 5*). That rate would be seriously challenging for the admissions office to handle today.

Finally, given Harvard's leadership position in higher education, we believe that it would be irresponsible to consider an entirely new approach to admissions at Harvard without considerable advance study. Thus, we believe that it would be unwise at this point to opt for an approach such as rolling admissions, which would be entirely new to the Ivy League and to us. (*See Exhibit 2: Range of Admission Process Options.*) In a domain in which we have tried to stand for transparency and simplicity, adding this kind of uncertainty and complexity seems to us irresponsible from the point of view of both principle and pragmatism. That said, we will continue to evaluate a full range of options as we move forward.

### *Enhanced Recruiting through "Likely Letters" and other Means*

In addition to reintroducing early action, we also recommend expanding the use of "likely" letters to top students who may have missed the early action deadline but are certain to be admitted. (*See Exhibit 4: Sample Likely Letter.*) These might include students from modest economic backgrounds whose inadequate high school counseling causes them to miss the November 1 deadline, but would also include the most talented students from all backgrounds. In particular, we may be able to engage student groups, alumni/ae and faculty members to recruit the top admitted students who typically yield at lower rates including engineers, physical scientists and computer scientists, as well as underserved or underrepresented students. Harvard sent 335 likely letters to applicants to the Class of 2014, 221 of whom were athletes, pressured by other institutions to respond to "exploding" offers of admission.

We expect that the combination of early action and an increased use of “likely” letters among targeted groups will be a step in the direction of maintaining our commitment to access. However, this will not be possible without recruiting initiatives targeted toward particular populations of students. The elimination of early action allowed us to extend our recruiting period through the fall and identify strategies and mechanisms to identify and engage talented students from all backgrounds. We plan to continue to use and expand these techniques even with the reintroduction of early action.

Accompanying the reinstatement of early action, we propose to enhance recruiting for top students from families and schools less likely to be “plugged in” to the full range of admissions options. (See *Exhibit 17: Potential New Recruiting Initiatives*.) Dean Fitzsimmons will be working over the next two months to refine and cost out a series of proposals for approval by Deans Smith and Hammonds. At this point, we are thinking about the following kinds of initiatives to expand Harvard’s reach to previously underserved populations who have limited exposure to Harvard:

- A new program promoting transparency in college admissions, offering print and web-based guides on how to apply to college, when to apply under early admission programs, as well as information about how colleges make admissions decisions;
- Targeted staff visits to areas where few students apply early to college;
- Greater use of electronic and other outreach to students less likely to apply early (or regular) to selective colleges;
- Increased involvement of Harvard undergraduates throughout the year in three major recruiting efforts: the Harvard Financial Aid Initiative, the Undergraduate Minority Recruitment Program, and the Undergraduate Admissions Council’s Return to High School Program;
- Enhanced web features providing families with the ability to calculate the likely net cost to them of sending a child to Harvard and perspectives from financial aid students on life at Harvard;
- Extended fall travel in late October and November to areas with large numbers of under-served students based on the experience of the past few years without early admission; and
- New outreach by Harvard’s 12,000 alumni/ae volunteers to high schools that send few students to selective institutions.

These efforts will aim to bring Harvard to groups of students who would not have considered Harvard College a realistic option for them – whether they are low income, from high schools with few students attending four-year colleges, or engineers or physical scientists who do not think of Harvard’s programs when considering college. These efforts will improve our ability to identify talented students from all backgrounds and with a full range of interests.

## Conclusion

For the reasons stated, we respectfully request that you grant approval to the College to reinstate an early action program.

**Public Announcement of the Decision**

If we make this change, we would propose to announce the decision within the next several weeks. At the very latest, we would need to announce it no later than early April when we begin the recruiting season for the Class of 2016 (current high school juniors). For purposes of recruiting, we need to make sure that the change in policy is reflected in our print and electronic communications and in our live messages to students, parents, and high school guidance counselors across the country.

We are working with Christine Heenan and her team to determine the best timing and strategy for a press announcement in relation to the upcoming announcement about this year's "package" increase. *See draft press release, attached.*



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**2.01.11****HARVARD COLLEGE TO RESTORE EARLY ACTION AND CREATE A NEW INITIATIVE  
TO LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD IN EARLY ADMISSION**

Harvard College announced today that it will restore non-binding early action as part of its admissions process next fall (2011) and invest in a significantly enhanced recruiting program to assist talented students from modest economic backgrounds in navigating the admissions process. Harvard will also increase its investment in undergraduate financial aid, maintaining its policy of “zero contribution” from families with normal assets making \$60,000 or less annually, and only 0-10% of annual income from those between \$60,000-\$180,000. Harvard currently spends over \$150 million annually from its own funds on financial aid.

In 2007, Harvard eliminated its non-binding early action program on a trial basis and moved to a single admissions deadline, announcing at the time that it would evaluate the impact of the change after several years.

“We piloted the elimination of early action out of concern that college admissions had become too complex and pressured for all students, and out of particular concern for students at under-resourced high schools who might not be able to access the early admissions process,” said Harvard President Drew Faust. “Given the economic climate over the past several years, however, interest in early admissions has increased, as students and families from across the economic spectrum seek certainty about college choices and financing. Our goal now is to reinstitute an early action program consistent with our bedrock commitment to access, affordability, and excellence.”

“Many highly talented students, including some of the best-prepared low-income and underrepresented minority students – want and expect an early admissions option,” said Michael Smith, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. “We are concerned that by not having early action these students may be missing out on the opportunity to consider Harvard. We have decided that the College and our students will be best served by restoring an early option.”

Harvard’s concerns about equity and transparency will continue to guide the structure of its admission program. It will maintain a non-binding approach, which maximizes freedom and flexibility for students. As in the past, students will apply under single-choice early action program by November 1 and will be notified by December 15, at which point students completing financial aid applications will receive notice of their awards. Regular decision will continue to operate as usual, with applications due on January 1 and notification on April 1. All students, whether admitted under early action or regular decision, will have until May 1 to decide whether to attend.

To ensure that the return to early action serves Harvard’s commitment to access and diversity across many dimensions, the change in admissions policy will be accompanied by significant enhancements in the College’s recruiting program, including:

- A new program promoting transparency in college admissions, offering print and web-based guides on how to apply to college, when to apply under early admission programs, as well as information about how colleges make admissions decisions;
- Targeted staff visits to areas where few students apply early to college;

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- Greater use of electronic and other outreach to students less likely to apply early (or regular) to selective colleges;
- Increased involvement of Harvard undergraduates throughout the year in three major recruiting efforts: the Harvard Financial Aid Initiative, the Undergraduate Minority Recruitment Program, and the Undergraduate Admissions Council's Return to High School Program;
- Enhanced web features providing families with the ability to calculate the likely net cost to them of sending a child to Harvard and perspectives from financial aid students on life at Harvard;
- Extended fall travel in late October and November to areas with large numbers of under-served students based on the experience of the past few years without early admission; and
- New outreach by Harvard's 12,000 alumni/ae volunteers to high schools that send few students to selective institutions.

"The commitment to including first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented minority students in the full spectrum of admissions options is a key feature of this new early action option," said Harvard College Dean Evelyn Hammonds. "We have made significant gains in recent years in recruiting larger numbers of these students and in supporting them for success once here. I am very pleased, therefore, that we are able to reconceive early action, not as a retreat from these goals, but as an enhancement, and to work with students based on whatever timetable best meets their needs."

"We continue to be concerned about the pressures on students today, including those associated with college admission," said Harvard College Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, William R. Fitzsimmons. "In all of our work, we will do everything possible to level the playing field in admissions and encourage all students to make thoughtful choices about how they can best contribute to society."

**Exhibit 1: Early Admission Programs – Models and Peer Practices**

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

Plan	Description	Deadlines			Example Institutions Using Practice
		Application	Notification	Enrollment	
Binding Early Decision (Fall)	Binding: Student can only apply early to one institution. Must withdraw all other applications if admitted.	November	December	January/February	Brown, Dartmouth, Duke, Columbia, Cornell, Johns Hopkins, Northwestern, U. of Pennsylvania, Rice, U. of Rochester, Washington U., Vanderbilt (+ All COFHE Colleges, Middlebury)
Binding Early Decision (Winter)	Second opportunity for binding early decision at schools that also offer fall early decision. Student can only apply early to one institution. Must withdraw all other applications if admitted.	January	February	March	Bryn Mawr, Carleton, Middlebury, Mt. Holyoke, Swarthmore, Wesleyan
Single-Choice Early Action	Non-binding: Student can apply to only one early action program, but may apply to any regular decision program. <sup>1</sup> Student is not bound to enroll if admitted to early program.	November	December	May	Stanford, Yale
Open/Non-restrictive Early Action	Non-binding: Student can apply to any other institution early or regular. Student is not bound to enroll if admitted to early program.	November	January	May	Cal Tech, Chicago, Georgetown, MIT, Michigan, Trinity, UVA
"Likely" Letters	Non-binding: Student receives an early notification of likely admittance prior to April formal notification	October 1 To March 15	Rolling (April for final decision)	May	Used intensively for athletes and other top admits at all Ivy League institutions including Harvard
Accelerated Admission	Students apply regular decision in junior year of high school and are admitted on the same cycle as regular applicants.	January	March/April	May	Pomona, Wellesley

Most Restrictive

Least Restrictive

1. Students are permitted to apply regular decision to other programs because regular decision post-dates early action notification. Some single choice programs such as the one we are proposing Harvard reintroduce, allow students to apply to public institutions with non-binding early action or international programs on any admissions cycle.

**Exhibit 2: Range of Admission Process Options**

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

<b>Plan</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Existing and Proposed Harvard Options</b>
Binding Early Decision	Students apply to only one program early and, if admitted, are bound to enroll. Students apply by November 1, receive notification by December 15.	
Single Choice Early Action	Students apply to only one program early and, if admitted, are NOT bound to enroll. Students apply by November 1, receive notification by December 15, and reply by May 1.	Proposed policy for reintroduction
Open Early Action	Students apply to multiple non-binding early action programs Students apply by November 1, receive notification by December 15, and reply by May 1.	
Staged Rolling Admission	Admissions conducted over several rounds with fixed dates during which applications are read and students are notified of their admission status. Students choose to apply during one round only.	For example, HBS admits students over three rounds
Rolling Admission	Students apply at any point from November 1 to April 1. Decisions are made on a rolling basis.	
"Likely" Letters	Students apply and are notified if they are likely to be admitted prior to final notification, which occurs with all regular applicants. The Ivy League permits sending likely letters between October 1 and March 15. Likely letters are typically used with athletes pressured by other universities, but are also often sent to other top admits with superior qualifications.	Currently Harvard sends "likely" notifications to 200 athletes and 100 other top admits. Proposed to continue with "likely" letters to top candidates.
Regular Decision	Students apply to as many programs as they want. Students apply by January 1, receive notification on April 1, and reply by May 1.	To continue along with wait list and deferrals.

**Exhibit 3: Overview of Proposed Total Admissions Cycle at Harvard**

	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun - July	Impact
<b>Early Action</b>	Student applies by 11/1	Harvard notifies by 12/15					Student enrolls by 5/1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows top students with a strong interest in Harvard to apply and receive early notification</li> <li>Allows Harvard to begin intensive recruiting of highly desirable students beginning 12/15</li> </ul>
<b>Regular Decision</b>			Student applies by 1/1			Harvard notifies by 4/1	Student enrolls by 5/1		
<b>"Likely" Letters</b>		Student applies (after early deadline) by 1/1 Harvard notifies if "likely admit"				Harvard confirms decision by 4/1	Student enrolls by 5/1		Allows Harvard to identify top admits in the regular pool and engage them earlier in the admissions process
<b>Waiting List</b>			Student applies by 1/1 or under Early Action			Harvard notifies of wait list status by 4/1	Students admitted off wait list between 5/1 and 7/1		Allows Harvard to admit students on a "space available" basis between May 1 and July 1 to ensure enrollment of a full class.

**Exhibit 4: Sample "Likely Letter"**

January 14, 2011

Dear:

I am delighted to report that the Admissions Committee has asked me to inform you that we will send you a formal letter offering you admission to the Class of 2015 on March 30. We send such an early positive indication only to outstanding applicants. The opinion of the Admissions Committee is not merely that your accomplishments—academic, extracurricular and personal—are impressive, but also that you would be a particularly good match for the opportunities and challenges here. In short, we think you would flourish at Harvard, and we are eager to encourage you to make it your college choice.

In making that decision we assume that you will maintain your current academic and personal standards. Our decision to offer you admission would be altered only by a significant decline in your performance or by conduct that raises serious questions of character or maturity, the conditions on which our admissions offers are made.

There has never been a more exciting time to be at Harvard. Founded in 1636, America's first college has been transformed in recent years by new initiatives that have greatly enhanced the undergraduate experience. Today's students come from all over the nation and the world to attend an extraordinary institution that combines many aspects of a small residential college with the resources of an unparalleled university.

Harvard's foundation rests on the extraordinary strength of the undergraduate college, the historic and physical center of the University in Cambridge. The liberal arts experience of our students is enriched by the scholarship and research of a world-renowned faculty deeply engaged in undergraduate teaching. With over one hundred and thirty Freshman Seminars, renowned small group tutorials, seminars and supervised research in more than forty fields of study, and with twenty or fewer students in over 1000 of our 1360 courses, Harvard offers a highly personalized education.

The academic resources at Harvard are remarkable by any standard. Our students enjoy the world's largest university library system (over 17 million volumes), "cutting-edge" scientific laboratories and thirteen university museums. The participation of undergraduates in faculty research is a hallmark of Harvard's undergraduate education. Students may design their own research plans and work closely with faculty members on many projects of mutual interest.

Harvard's residential system provides a "home away from home" as well as one of our greatest educational assets. Freshmen live together in Harvard Yard, and upperclassmen belong to one of twelve residential Houses. Each House is led by a senior faculty Master, and includes faculty and scholarly associates in a community where the

common life in the dining halls and library is complemented by House athletic competitions, drama, political and musical events, and many other activities. The House experience often provides many of the defining moments of a Harvard education and is one of the major reasons Harvard's graduation rate (96-98%) is always at or near the top of the nation's colleges.

College-wide extracurricular activities are a major focus of commitment for many students. Harvard has long valued musical performance, drama, journalism and public service, to mention only a few of our 450 student organizations. In addition, we offer forty-one intercollegiate sports, the largest number in any Division I program in the country.

Another special feature of Harvard is our location in the Boston area, one of the world's great centers of student and university life known as "America's college town." Internships are readily available to all undergraduates in a wide variety of public and private organizations. Cambridge and Boston also offer superb musical, dramatic and other cultural opportunities alongside the Boston Red Sox, the Celtics, the Bruins, the Patriots, and the Revolution.

Remarkably diverse in their achievements and backgrounds, Harvard students come from public, private and parochial schools, from every state and many foreign countries. Lifelong friendships result from the close interaction students have in the residential Houses, and perhaps the most important part of your education will come from getting to know your fellow classmates. Following graduation, our alumni/ae find themselves well positioned for success in whatever profession or career they have chosen. Admission is determined without regard to financial need, and seventy percent of our students receive financial aid.

We hope you will be able to visit Harvard for our April Visiting Program designed for admitted students or at another time. We very much look forward to seeing you in Cambridge.

Yours sincerely,

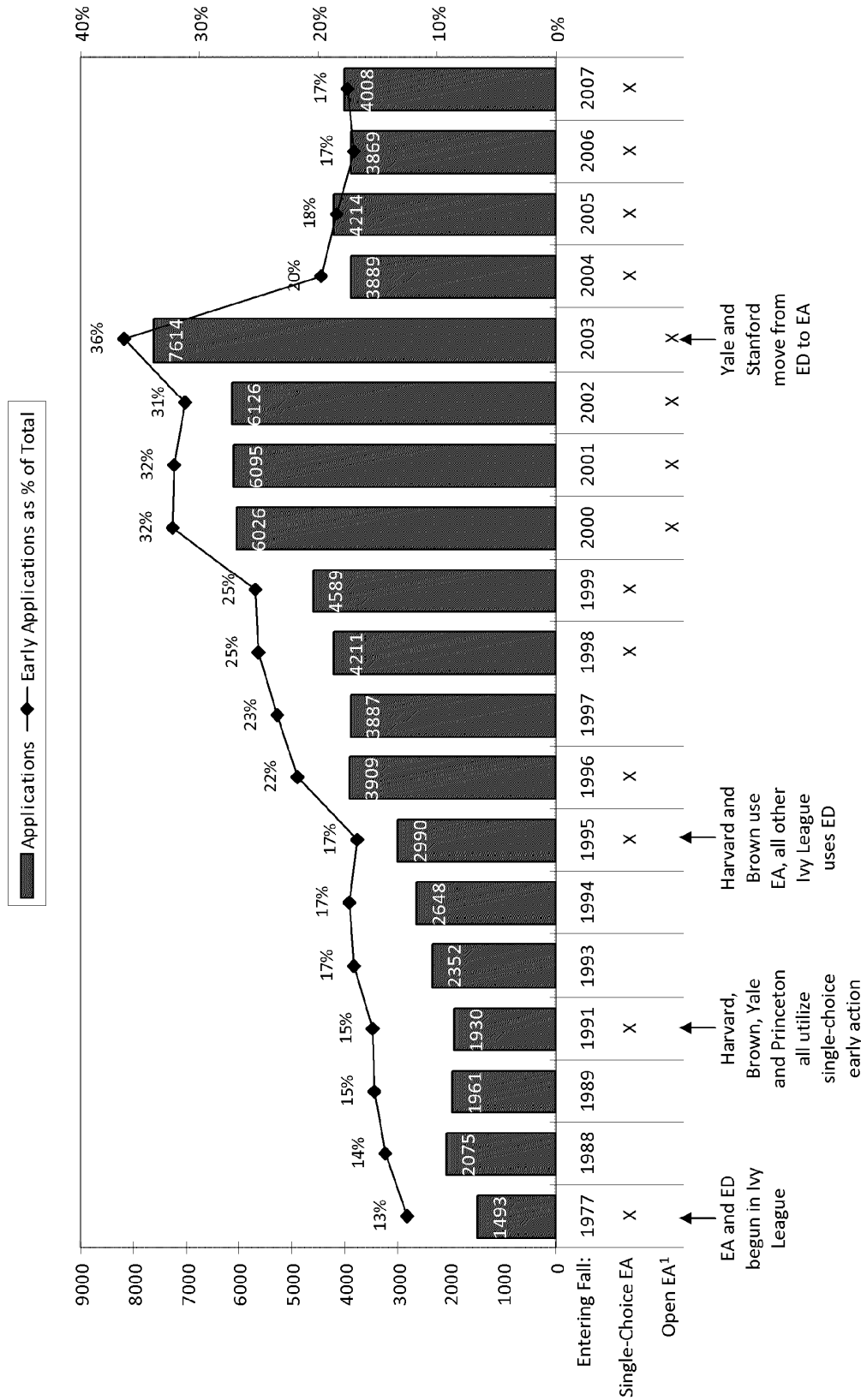
William R. Fitzsimmons  
Dean of Admissions and  
Financial Aid

Exhibit 5: History of Early Admissions at Harvard

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

- Early applications rose steadily until 2008, when we moved back to the more restrictive single choice early action
- Since the class of 2000, Harvard has admitted between 813 (2010) and 1186 (2003) students early

Number of Early Applications and Admit Rate for Early Applicants at Harvard, Selected Years, 1977-2007



1. For entering fall 2000-2002, the only restriction placed on applicants was that they could not apply to an institution binding early decision.  
Source: Office of Admissions



Exhibit 6: Press Release, September 12, 2006



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## HARVARD GAZETTE ARCHIVES



"The college admissions process has become too pressured, too complex, and too vulnerable to public cynicism," said Harvard interim President Derek Bok. "We hope that doing away with early admission will improve the process and make it simpler and fairer." (Staff photo Justin Ide/Harvard News Office)

### Harvard to eliminate early admission

Beginning next year Harvard College will eliminate its early admission program and move to a single application deadline of January 1, the University announced today (September 12). The change in policy, which builds on Harvard's efforts over the past several years to expand financial aid and increase openness in admissions, will take effect for students applying in the fall of 2007 for the freshman class entering in September 2008.

"The college admissions process has become too pressured, too complex, and too vulnerable to public cynicism," said Harvard interim President Derek Bok. "We hope that doing away with early admission will improve the process and make it simpler and fairer."

"Early admission programs tend to advantage the advantaged," Bok continued. "Students from more sophisticated backgrounds and affluent high

University contact:

Exhibit 6: Press Release, September 12, 2006

schools often apply early to increase their chances of admission, while minority students and students from rural areas, other countries, and high schools with fewer resources miss out. Students needing financial aid are disadvantaged by binding early decision programs that prevent them from comparing aid packages. Others who apply early and gain admission to the college of their choice have less reason to work hard at their studies during their final year of high school."

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Many leaders in higher education have spoken publicly about their concerns regarding early admission programs. Harvard will thus delay the shift to a single admissions deadline until the fall of 2007, so that other institutions wishing to make a change will have time to adjust their processes in the same admissions cycle. Furthermore, Harvard will commence the unitary system with a two- to three-year trial period so that it can monitor the impact of this change and make sure that it does not have a negative impact on student quality.

"I am delighted that President Bok and the Corporation have determined that we are in a position to take this excellent step," said Jeremy R. Knowles, interim Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. "The frenzy that surrounds college admissions threatens important educational values, and early admission programs are part of the problem. These programs distort the high school experience by forcing both students and colleges to commit prematurely, based only upon the record at the end of the student's junior year. Moreover, students who are admitted early receive what often appears to be a 'free pass' for their second semester, sadly encouraging them to disengage from their academic experience.

"I hope that our decision to eliminate early action will help to turn down the heat on admissions, allowing students, parents, and teachers to continue to focus their energies on the joys and rigors of education itself," Knowles continued. "The impact will obviously be greater if other institutions join us in moving to a single, later, admissions cycle. I hope they will."

For students applying this year (fall 2006), Harvard's admission process, including early action, will be unchanged. Beginning in the fall of 2007, the application deadline for all applicants will be January 1. Harvard will maintain its current April 1 notification to students, and May 1, the national common reply date, as its deadline for receiving responses from students.

### **'Early action' versus 'early decision'**

Harvard's existing early admission program, adopted over 30 years ago, takes the form of nonbinding "early action," rather than the binding "early decision" used by many colleges with early admission programs. Under Harvard's current early action policy, students who apply by November 1 are notified by December 15 as to whether they are admitted, denied, or deferred to the regular pool. They are not, however, bound to accept an offer of admission, and they have until May 1 - the deadline for regular admissions - to make their decision.

Exhibit 6: Press Release, September 12, 2006

Harvard's early action program differs from so-called "binding" early decision programs, whereby a student makes a commitment at the time of application to attend if admitted. Harvard has always had early action rather than early decision because it preserves the ability of students to apply to other colleges during the regular admissions cycle, to compare financial aid packages, and to make a much more informed choice in May, rather than October, of their senior year.

"We have always felt that early action avoids the most troublesome aspects of binding early decision while preserving the original aim of early admission - providing students with early notification of admission without binding those who change their minds later in the process," said William R. Fitzsimmons, Dean of Admissions at Harvard College. "If after several years with a single admissions deadline, we find ourselves needing to reinstate early admission to preserve the quality of our student body, we will return to early action.

"We are concerned, however, that even our non-binding program contributes to the pressures and inequities of the college admissions process," Fitzsimmons continued. "Only the more sophisticated students and families look behind the label of 'early admission' and distinguish early action from binding early decision programs. Thus students from less advantaged backgrounds either fail to take advantage of early admission because they are less well-advised overall, or they consciously avoid our program on the mistaken assumption that they will be unable to compare financial aid packages.

"Under the leadership of Larry Summers, we have worked aggressively over the past several years to expand financial aid, and families with incomes under \$60,000 are no longer required to contribute to the cost of a Harvard education," Fitzsimmons added. "An early admission program that is less accessible to students from modest economic backgrounds operates at cross-purposes with our goal of finding and admitting the most talented students from across the economic spectrum."

### **Expanded outreach and recruiting**

Harvard intends to use the time and capacity freed up by the move to a single admissions cycle to focus more energetically on outreach and recruiting. Fitzsimmons and his admissions staff will travel more widely to make presentations in key cities and other areas to educate students, families, and college counselors about Harvard and the college admissions process more generally. The University will also work with secondary schools in a renewed effort to make applying to college less complicated and less stressful than it is today.

According to Fitzsimmons, this effort is particularly important in light of disparities in access to, and the quality of, college counseling. The average ratio of students to college counselors in the United States is 500/1. In some states, such as California, the ratio is 1000/1, and many high schools have eliminated college counseling altogether.

Some affluent schools, however, have student to counselor ratios as low as 50/1,

Exhibit 6: Press Release, September 12, 2006

in addition to parents who are more knowledgeable about college admissions and more likely to be able to supplement school counseling with outside help.

"As a person who has worked in college admissions for over 30 years, I am particularly grateful to Dean Knowles, President Bok, and the Harvard Corporation for supporting this move away from early admission," said Fitzsimmons. "I hope and expect that this change will sharpen the focus of the admissions process on its most important goal - helping students find the right college match."



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## **Exhibit 7: The Decision to Eliminate Early Action in 2007**

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

### **Rationale:**

- ✓ Simplify admissions for Harvard applicants and more broadly
- ✓ Eliminate the admissions advantage from applying early
- ✓ Extend the fall recruiting period
- ✓ Reinforce Harvard's message regarding access and affordability

**Exhibit 8: Summary of Results from the Early Action Experiment**

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

**Rationale:**

- ✓ Simplify admissions for Harvard applicants and more broadly
- ✓ Eliminate the admissions advantage from applying early
- ✓ Extend the fall recruiting period
- ✓ Reinforce Harvard's message regarding access and affordability

**Results:**

- Increased applications from all types of students
- Improved recruiting timeline and mechanisms for engaging with previously underserved students
- Higher education did not change with us
  - Princeton and UVA were the only institutions to join us
  - Stanford and Yale maintained early action to their competitive advantage
  - UVA announced in December 2010 a move back to early admissions
  - The current economic and social climate has pushed institutions to further rely on their early action programs
- Declining yield rates, especially among targeted populations—those with high academic and extracurricular ratings, and under-represented minorities

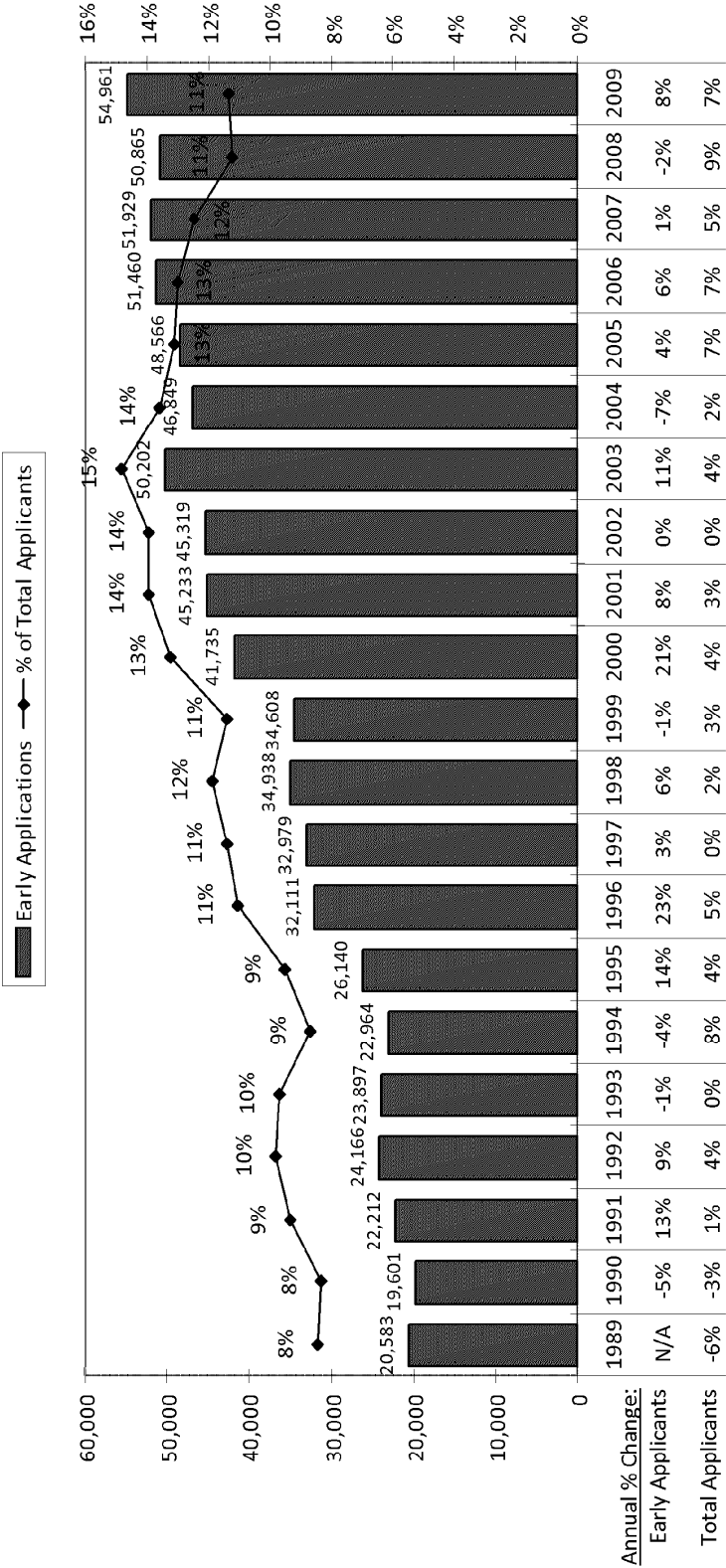


Exhibit 9: Early Applications to All COFHE Schools

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

- Early applications to COFHE institutions have increased almost every year since 1989
- At most, early applications represented 15% of total applications (in 2003). In recent years, early applications as a percent of all applications has declined.

Number of Early Applications and Early Applicants as a Percent of Total Applicants to All COFHE Schools, Entering Fall 1989 to 2009



**Recent results:**  
Stanford and Duke have seen record early applications for the Class of 2015, while MIT, Georgetown, and Penn have all had substantial increases over last year. Early applications to Yale are even with last year.

↑  
Last class at  
Harvard and  
Princeton  
with early  
admission

Source: Office of Admissions

Exhibit 10: Changes in yield rates – Since 2007 (the last class with early action)

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

- The yield rates for all applicants have declined since the end of early action.
- However, the yield rates for all applicants since the end of early action are higher than the yield rates for regular applicants before the policy change.

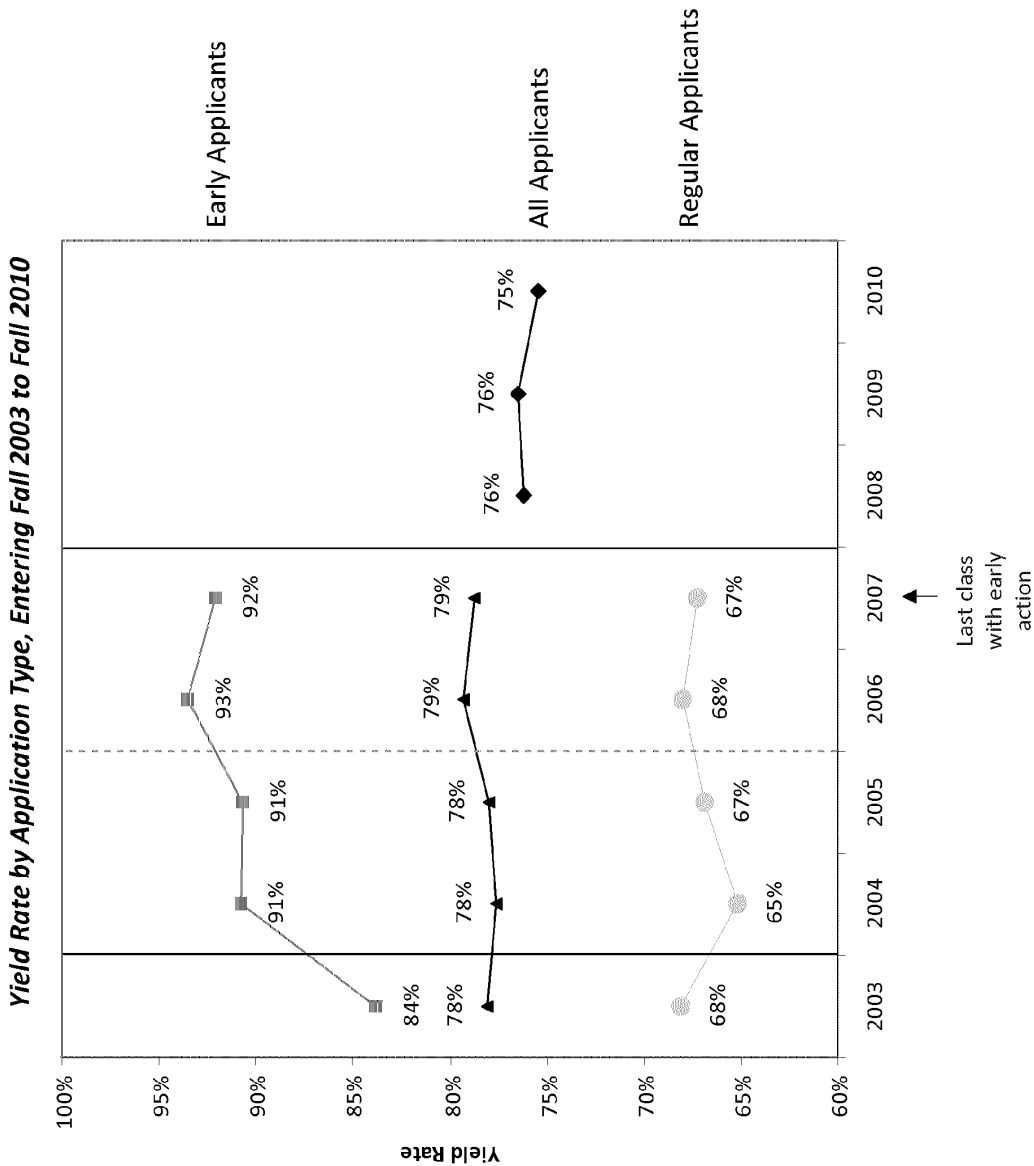


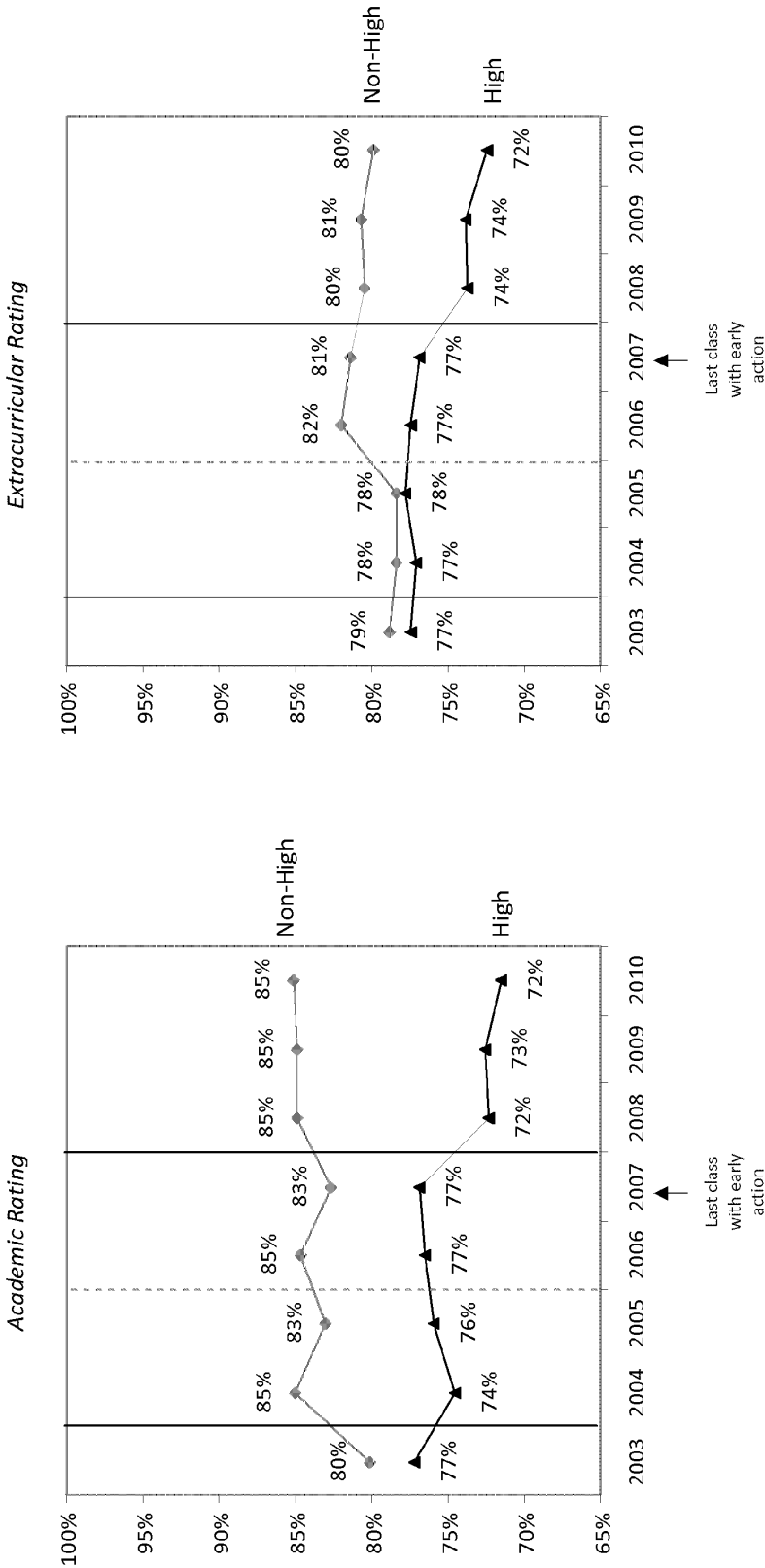


Exhibit 11: Changes in yield rates – By academic and extracurricular rating

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

- The yield rate gap between the most high rated (as measured by academic or extracurricular rating) and all other students increased after the end of early action.

Yield Rates by Academic and Extracurricular Ratings<sup>1</sup>, Fall 2003 to Fall 2010



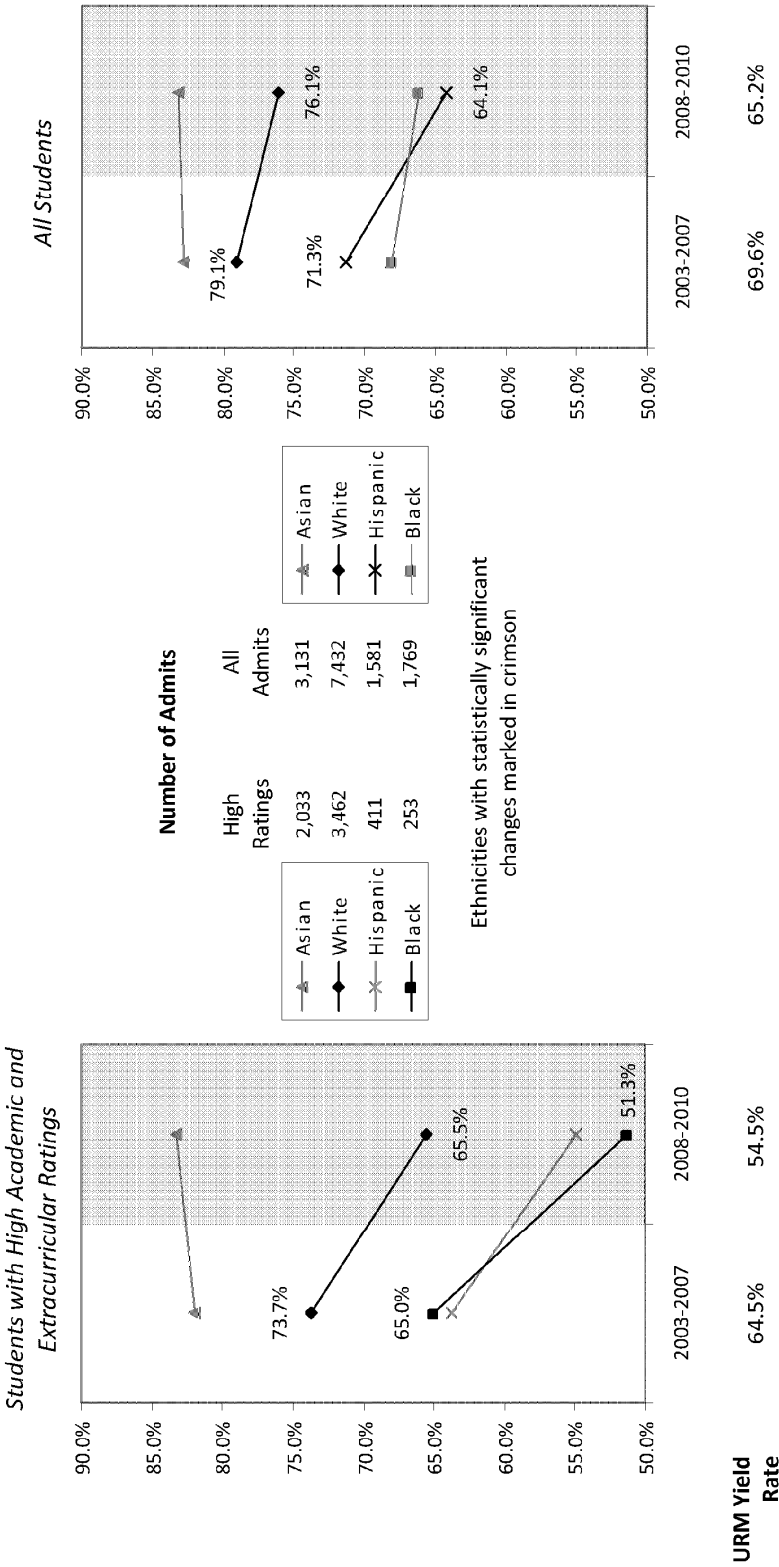
1. "High" indicates a rating of 1 or 2. Non-high are students with all other ratings.

Exhibit 12: Change in yield rates – By academic and extracurricular rating and race/ethnicity

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

- Yield rates for the most highly rated Hispanic, Black and white students declined after the end of early action.
- Yield rates for all Hispanic and white students declined after the end of early action.

Yield Rates by Race Ethnicity, Fall 2003 to Fall 2010



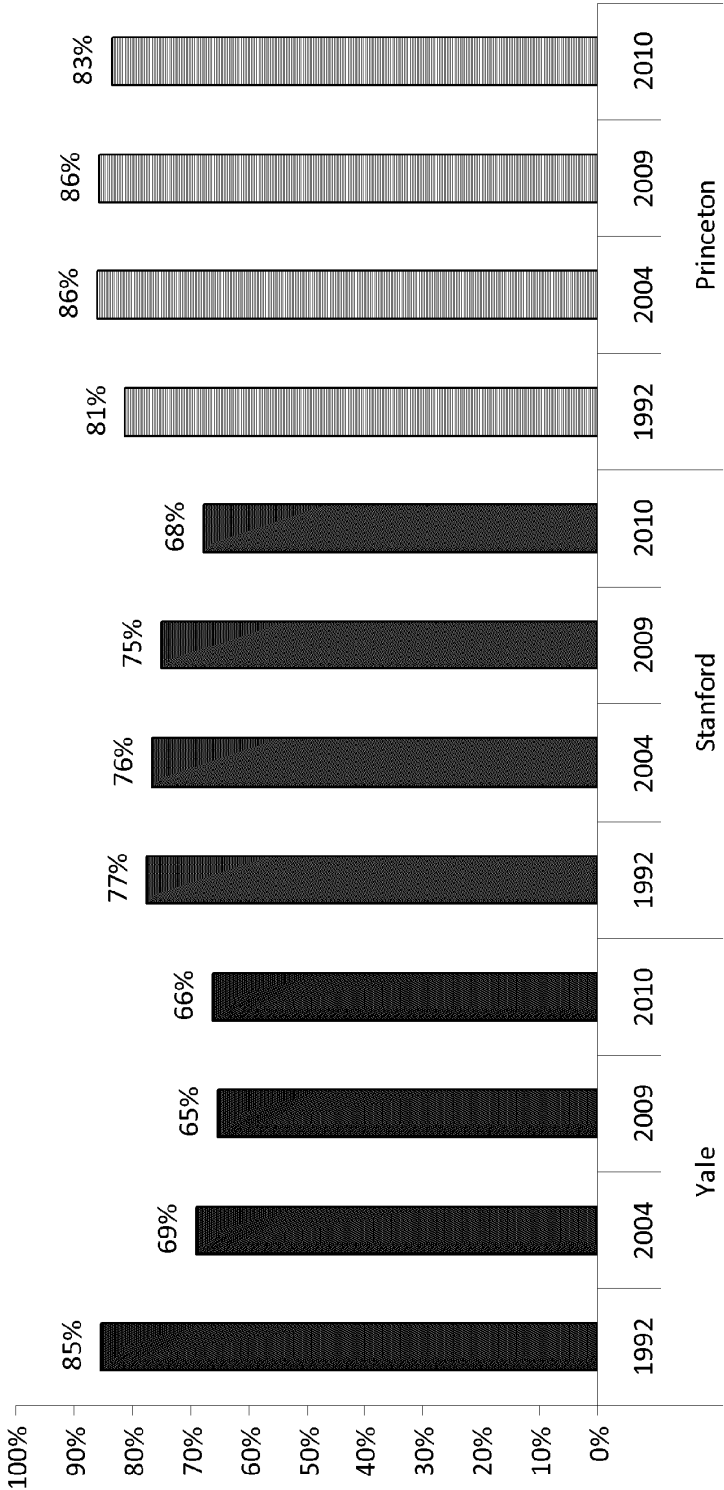
Source: Office of Admissions and Financial Aid. "High" rating indicates a rating of 1 or 2.

Exhibit 13: Admissions wins versus Yale, Stanford and Princeton

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

- For cross-admitted students, Harvard continues to win at less 2 out of every 3 from key peers

Harvard College Admit “Winning Percentage”  
Classes Entering Fall 1992, 2004, 2009, 2010



Source: Office of Admissions

**Exhibit 14: Top High Schools Sending Low-Income and Minority Students to Harvard****High Schools with Students Enrolling in the Class of 2014**

<b>High School</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Low-Income and/or Minority<sup>1</sup> Students</b>
Stuyvesant High School	New York, NY	10
Boston Latin School	Boston, MA	9
Brooklyn Tech High School	Brooklyn, NY	7
Phillips Exeter Academy	Exeter, NH	5
Whitney Young High School	Chicago, IL	5
Bellaire Senior High School	Bellaire, TX	3
Hinsdale Township High School	Hinsdale, IL	3
Loyola High School	Los Angeles, CA	3

- The Class of 2014 has 430 HFAI students and 342 underrepresented minority students
- Twenty-one (21) high schools sent 2 HFAI students and 18 sent 2 underrepresented minority students to Harvard
- Other notable high schools sending HFAI or underrepresented minority students include:
  - Central High School, Philadelphia, PA
  - Collegiate School, New York, NY,
  - Georgetown Day, Washington, D.C.
  - Harvard-Westlake, Los Angeles, CA
  - Milton Academy, Milton, MA
  - North Carolina School of Science and Math, Durham, NC
  - Palos Verdes High School, Palos Verdes Estates, CA

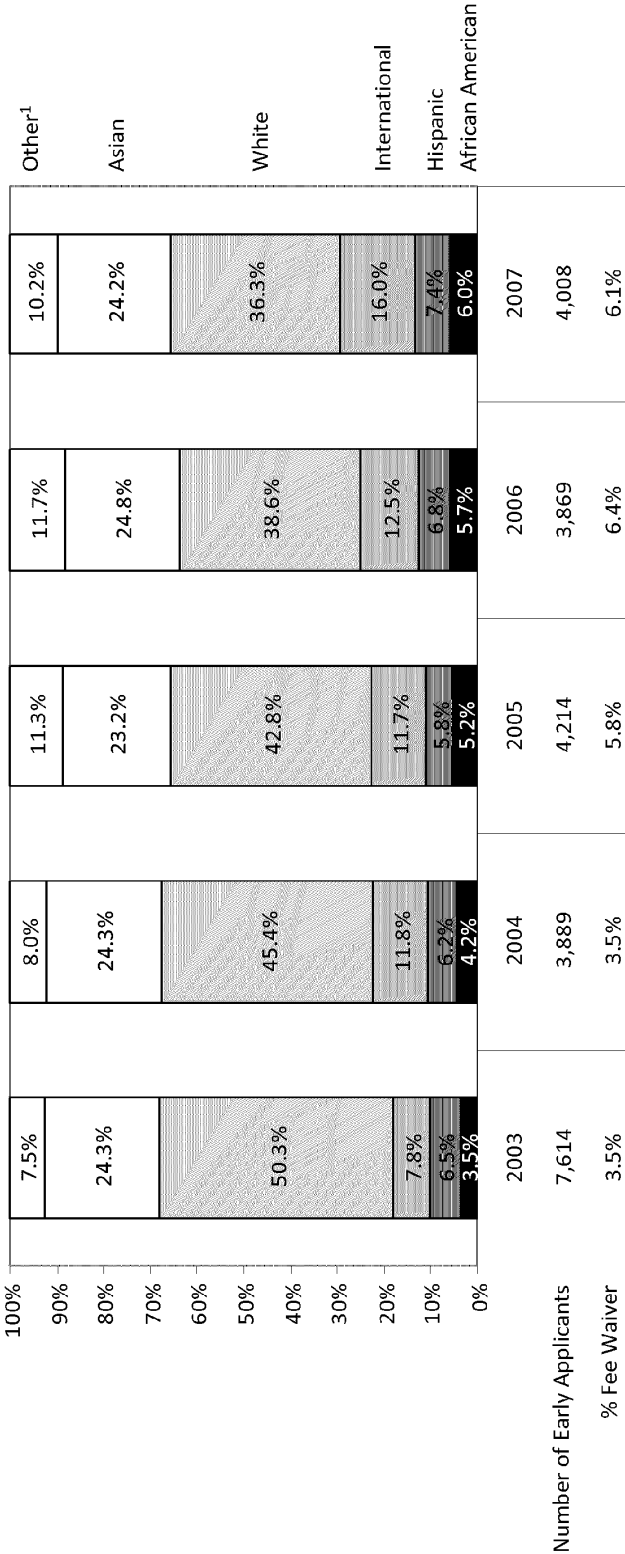
1. Underrepresented minority students included in count. Underrepresented minorities include students identifying as Black, Hispanic, Native American and multiple ethnicities.

Source: Office of Admissions

Exhibit 15: Diversity of Harvard’s Early Applicants

- The racial/ethnicity and income diversity of the early applicant pool increased after Harvard moved from open early action to single-choice early action beginning with the class entering in fall 2008

Number of Early Applicants by Race/Ethnicity to Harvard College, Entering Fall 2003 - 2007



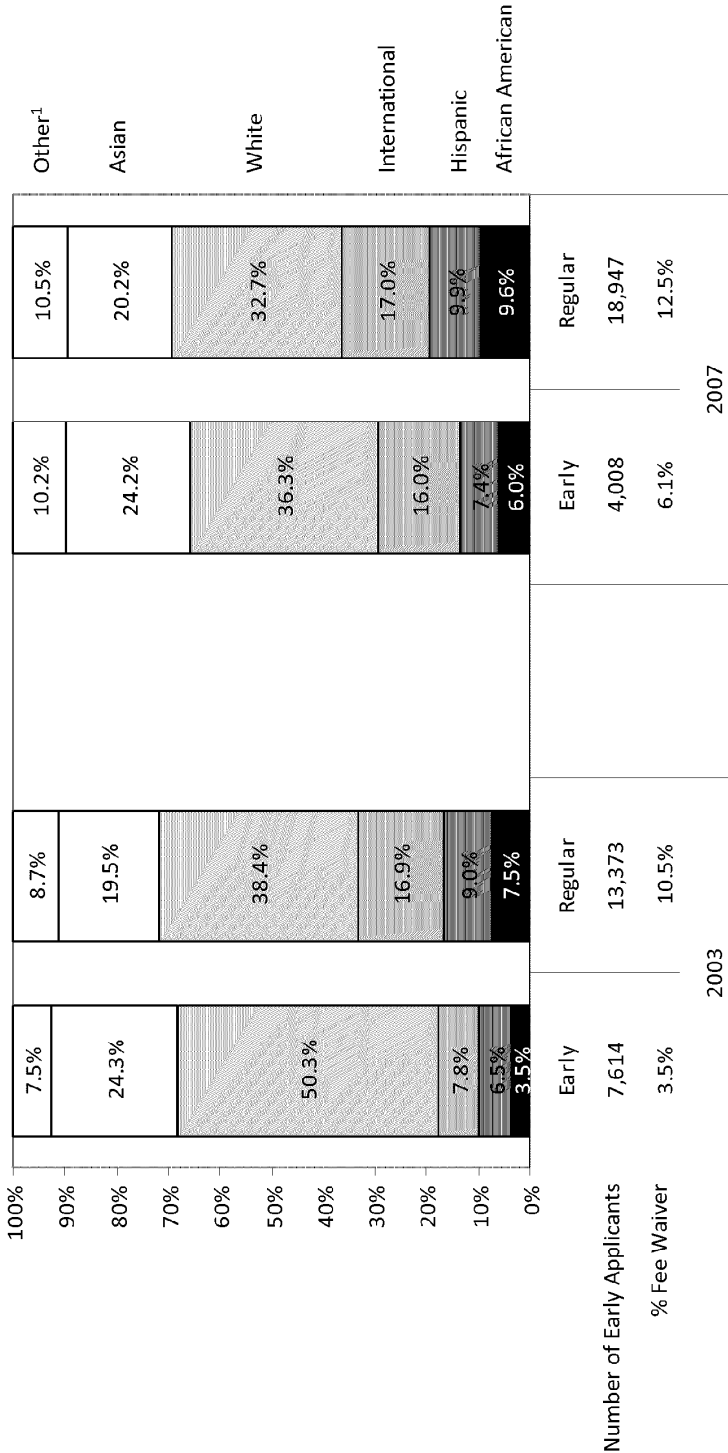
After Harvard moved to single-choice early action for the class entering fall 2008, which reduced the number of early applications Harvard received, the shares of African American, Hispanic, International, and low income students increased.

1. Other includes Native American, Other and Unknown.  
Source: Office of Admissions

Exhibit 16: Diversity of Harvard’s Early and Regular Applicants

- Early applicants to the class entering in fall 2003 were much less diverse than regular applicants.
- The demographics of early applicants to the class entering in fall 2007 more closely matched regular applicants that year.

Number of Early Applicants and Regular Applicants by Race/Ethnicity to Harvard College, Entering Fall 2003 and 2007



1. Other includes Native American, Other and Unknown.  
Source: Office of Admissions

## Exhibit 17: Potential New Recruiting Initiatives

1. A new program promoting transparency in college admissions, offering print and web-based guides on how to apply to college, when to apply under early admission programs, as well as information about how colleges make admissions decisions
2. Targeted staff visits to areas where few students apply early to college
3. Greater use of electronic and other outreach to students less likely to apply early (or regular) to selective colleges
4. Increased involvement of Harvard undergraduates throughout the year in three major recruiting efforts: the Harvard Financial Aid Initiative, the Undergraduate Minority Recruitment Program and the Undergraduate Admissions Council Return to High School Program
5. Enhanced features on our website providing families with the ability to calculate the likely net cost to them of sending a child to Harvard and perspectives from financial aid students on life at Harvard
6. Extended fall travel in late October and November to areas with large numbers of under-served students based on the experience of the past few years without early admission
7. New outreach by Harvard's 12,000 alumni/ae volunteers to high schools that send few students to selective institutions